

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE
AMITE RIVER BASIN DRAINAGE & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3535 S. Sherwood Forest Boulevard, Suite 120, Baton Rouge, LA

January 21, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ROLL CALL: Ben Babin, Jerry Thibeau, David Hoover, Lionel Bailey, Mark Harrell, James Little, Edwin Parker, Richard St. Pierre, Larry Thomas, Don Thompson, Kenneth Welborn

MEMBERS ABSENT: Willie George Lee, Tamiara Wade

ALSO, PRESENT: ARBC Executive Director Dietmar Rietschier, ARBC Executive Secretary Toni Guitrau, ARBC Legal Counsel Jenna Linn-Rice

1. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Babin.
2. Prayer/Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Public Comments on Agenda Items:
 - ARBC Hunting Leases: Pat Theophilus requested that ARBC not make changes to the existing hunting leases. He would like to get those involved with the hunting leases to work close with the Corps. His main concern is that if the hunting leases are cancelled, ARBC will have people trespassing, causing damage, with no liability insurance, and the property will not be managed properly.
 - Darlington Reservoir: John Johnston, III, PG, CPG, retired Research Associate of the Louisiana Geological Survey spoke about the reservoir being proposed by the USACE in the middle-upper Amite River Basin. Mr. Johnston indicated that he is very familiar with this issue as he served as co-chairman of former Governor Roemer's Task Force of the Darlington Reservoir. He said that years ago, they studied the dry vs. wet reservoirs thoroughly. Engineers, geologists, and economists etc. studied it. In his opinion, a dry reservoir would be superior in every way to a wet one. He spoke of the benefits of the dry reservoir in Houston, TX. He believes a wet reservoir would help a few from flooding, but a dry reservoir would help many.
4. Minutes
The Board unanimously approved a motion by Thompson, second by Thibeau to approve the December 2019 regular meeting minutes.
5. Financial Statement Report
Hoover presented to the Board the November and December 2019 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Parker, second by Thompson to approve the November and December 2019 General Fund and CRDC Fund financial statements.
6. Executive Director Report
 - LA Watershed Initiative Application/Grant Discussion: Rietschier reported to the Board that he submitted a Pre-Application for ARBC. Funding is coming from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is administered under the state Watershed Initiative. The pre-application submitted is for mitigation purposes to demolish repetitive loss structures and to help the people relocate, and/or to elevate structures. The following parishes requested to be included in the pre-application are East Feliciana, East Baton Rouge, Livingston, and St. James. If approved, ARBC will look for concentration areas of repetitive loss structures in the 4 parishes. Rietschier said these people need assistance. Harrell commended the ARBC for making this effort, and he said this would be 100% funding with no local match.
 - DOTD Report: Real estate is working on priority acquisitions at this time for the entire project. On the west side of US 61, CenturyLink is continuing their efforts. On the east side of US61, DEMCO is modifying their design to incorporate construction features requested by USACE, and Orx is completing the removal of their pipeline, and ExxonMobil is mobilizing to the site to begin preparation for tie in for the new pipeline. LA 964 continues in design with an anticipated bid date in early 2020. A designer has been selected for LA19 and LA67 and contractor selection is underway.
 - Darlington Reservoir Discussion: ARBC Board member, Larry Thomas, recently attended two public meetings in regard to the proposed Darlington Reservoir. At one of the meetings, the speaker said it would take approximately 15,000 acres and they didn't know how much mitigation property would be needed. Thomas has concerns that they did not consult with the Amite River Basin Commission regarding the proposed Darlington Reservoir. He stressed how the reservoir would have an adverse impact on property and businesses, including the gravel and timber industry. ARBC Board member, Ed Parker, attended the

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first public meeting of the Corps regarding the Darlington Reservoir. He also expressed concerns. He agreed with John Johnston regarding dry reservoirs being better than wet reservoirs, but nothing can be used until it dries up enough to get use out of it. He said when building a reservoir, it needs to be built where you can control the water flow. He said that the Amite River Basin Commission was created to cover the drainage and water conservation in the Amite River Basin District, and should be consulted regarding this proposed reservoir.

7. ARBC Legal Counsel: None
8. Old Business – None
9. New Business: Hunting Lease(s) Discussion - Rietschier provided maps of the Comite Diversion Canal foot-print in relation to ARBC's 7 hunting leases. He said that Tract 39 will have activities on it soon. Using the maps provided, he showed how the right-of-way passes through the property where there are hunting leases. He suggested, instead of cancelling leases, perhaps the right-of-way can be excluded from the leases. Tract 41 and 43 are almost 100% right-of-way. He would like to further discuss this with the DOTD and the Corps. He believes it is good to continue the leases so that the land is better maintained. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Thomas, second by Parker for Rietschier to proceed with discussing this information with the DOTD and the Corps.
10. The Board unanimously approved a motion by Thompson, seconded by Thomas to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 pm.

APPROVED:

/s/ Ben Babin, ARBC President
Date: February 18, 2020

/s/ Toni B. Guitrau, Executive Secretary